



Hazmat Challenge tests responders' skills in simulated emergencies

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LOS ALAMOS, N.M., Aug. 14, 2019—Ten hazardous materials response teams from Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Tennessee will test their skills in a series of graded exercises Aug. 19-23 at Los Alamos National Laboratory's Hazmat Challenge.

"The Challenge provides a unique training venue for hazmat responders where they are able to test and develop their technical response capabilities in a difficult but safe environment," said Jeff Dare, group leader for Emergency Response at Los Alamos National Laboratory. "Recent upgrades to our Emergency Response Training Center have allowed us to create the most challenging scenarios yet."

Held at Los Alamos, the event requires participants to respond to simulated hazardous-materials emergencies involving aircraft, rail and highway transportation, industrial piping, a biological lab, a confined space event, and more. The finale of the Hazmat Challenge is a skills-based obstacle course. Teams are graded and earn points based on their ability to perform response skills through a 10-station obstacle course while using fully encapsulating personal protective equipment.

The Laboratory began the Hazmat Challenge in 1996 to hone the skills of its own hazmat team members. The event is now a comprehensive training opportunity in a competitive format that is open to all hazardous materials response teams across the nation. The winning team receives a traveling trophy and top-scoring teams in the technical categories are awarded permanent trophies. Separate trophies will be awarded to the three top scoring teams in the obstacle course event.

Funding for New Mexico teams is provided through federal grants through the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Los Alamos National Laboratory

www.lanl.gov

(505) 667-7000

Los Alamos, NM

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